Kashmir Issue

558. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: SHRI AKHILESH DAS: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAMJI LAL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that not only Pakistan but South Africa also raked up the Kashmir issue at the Non-Aligncd Summit meet at Durban;

(b) if so, the context and content of their respective move;

(c) India's response and reaction thereto;

(d) whether no prior discussion was held in this meet by the Government of India with the Government of South Africa; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the officers responsible for the lapse?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Foreign Minister of Pakistan in his statement at the Non-Aligncd Summit in Durban said *inter alia* that "the unresolved issued of Kashmir is a major cause of tension and instability (which) has led to new escalations and dangers"; he also referred to the so-called "right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir". Pakistan has been making such references at earlier NAM Summits and other international fora.

The South African President mentioned the Kashmir issue briefly while referring to areas to tension in various parts of the world during his inaugural address at the Summit and said: "All of us remain concerned that the issue of Jammu & Kashmir should be solved through peaceful negotiations and (NAM) should be willing to lend all the strength we have to the resolution of this matter"

(c) The Prime Minister stated in his address to the NAM Summit that the Shimla Agreement, which both India and Pakistan have ratified, provides an agreed mechanism for resoving these differences amicably between the two countries. The Prime Minister also stated that there is no place for any third party involvement in this process, howsoever well intcntioncd. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is, and will remain, an integral part of India. The real problem there is one of cross-border terrorism.

The Prime Minister also separately raised the matter with the South African President. Subsequently, the Deputy President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, provided some clarifications and expressed regret for the misunderstanding it has caused. India regards the matter as closed,

It may also be noted that in the subsequent statement by the South African President at the 53rd regular session of UN General Assembly, no reference was made to Jammu & Kashmir.

(d) Extensive prior consultations were held with the Government of South Afirca on all NAM-related matters. The Government of South Africa is fully aware of India's position on the Jammu & Kashmir issue.

(e) Does not arise.

Proposal for Signing CTBT

559. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to sign Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT);

(b) whether objections earlier raised by India have been met; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if no, the reasons for the willingness to sign the treaty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) India has announced that it is prepared to bring its discussions with key interlocutors on a range of issues, including the CTBT, to successful conclusion so that the entry into force of the CTBT is not delayed beyond September, 1999. Government expects that other countries, as included in Article XIV of the CTBT, will adhere to the Treaty without conditions.

(b) and (c) India's stand on the CTBT was based on the assessment that the Treaty did not address our security concerns. The nuclear tests conducted by India in May 1998 have given us the basic capability for assured security. This is the rationale for the voluntary moratorium which fulfills the basic obligation required under the Treaty. This action has been taken only after the imperatives of national security obligations have been fully addressed.

Theft of Passports

560. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Policy have seized 972 blank passports stolen from Ghaziabad Regional Passport Office; and

(b) if so, whether any in depth probe has been made to identify the conniving officials and what precautionary safety measures have been taken in similarly vulnerable offices to avoid recurrences of such situations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) 962 out of a consignment of 1000 blank passport booklets stolen from the Passport Office at Ghaziabad, have been seized by the Delhi Police. The Passport Office at Ghaziabad has also filed a FIR with the Kavi Nagar Police Station.

(b) Apart from policy investigation of the theft, a departmental enquiry has been initiated regarding procedural lapses at the Passport Office and appropriate action will be taken against the officials found responsible. Suitable instructions for the safe keeping and account of blank passport booklets in stock have been emphatically reiterated to all Passport Offices for strict compliance. The importance of vigilance in ensuring that such incidents do not recur has been impressed on them.

Regional Passport Offices

561. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHA VAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to delink the Regional Passport Offices from the administrative control of the Ministry of External Affairs;

(b) in the alternative whether there is any decision to set-up a separate unit to attend to the welfare and administrative matters of the employees of the Regional Passport Offices;

(c) if not, whether Government pro cess to constitute a team to examine the problem being faced by the employees of the Regional Passport Offices; and

(d) if so, the time frame required, for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir. The existing administrative framework is Considered sufficient for this purpose.

(d) Does not arise.

Nuclear Tests

562. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN- Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the response of Pakistan, China.